

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION**  
**REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO ASSIST LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**  
**BALDRIGE ACHIEVEMENT PLUS PARTNERSHIP GRANT**

**1) BACKGROUND**

**The Santa Cruz County Office of Education has perfected a systemic school improvement approach that raises achievement for all students. This proven approach is called “Baldrige in Education”. The Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence provide the framework for continuous improvement at the classroom and school level, and can be extended to include district, county and regional providers.**

**Demographics**

Although predominately agricultural, Santa Cruz County is made up of mostly small communities having diverse socio-economic and linguistic populations. Like many other counties in the state, Santa Cruz is transitioning from rural to urban. According to the 2000 Census, in the past ten years, the population in the northern part of the county, including Santa Cruz City, has increased 11.3 % and the southern part of the county, including the city of Watsonville, has increased 42.3%. Southern Santa Cruz County is home to a predominately Latino population, now 75% of the total population. Because of high poverty and the need to draw business into the area, the city of Watsonville is a designated Economic Enterprise Zone.

The Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) serves ten districts and 40,400 students in Santa Cruz County. Eighteen of the county's seventy schools were recently placed on the state's under-performing schools list. Eleven schools did not meet their API improvement targets. The vast majority of the county's low performing schools are located in the South County area in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD). PVUSD is the county's largest district and serves 19,886 students. PVUSD has an extremely high concentration of Limited English Proficient students and sixty-one percent of their students are from low-income families. The low performing schools in this area will be the target of this proposal.

As a result of local growth as well as the turnover caused by the high cost of coastal living, the demand for trained certificated teachers has risen dramatically. During the 2000-01 school year, 300 new teachers were hired in Santa Cruz. 42% of those teachers have emergency credentials. These teachers require extensive training and support. While a part of the Greater Bay Area, the geographical isolation of the county provides challenges to accessing professional development opportunities.

**Partnerships**

As a small county office, the SCCOE has long recognized and developed its mission around the value of developing and maintaining educational partnerships. Internally, we have built a community of dedicated professionals who enjoy working collaboratively, including Special Education Local Planning Area, Child Development Resource Center, Alternative Education, Regional Occupational Programs, and our Data Processing and Technology Department. Our closest partnerships are with our local districts and schools. In addition to COE

programs and departments, our regional partnerships bring specialized services to our local schools. Our regional providers include: 1) Professional Development Consortium (PDC), 2) Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), 3) California School Leadership Academy (CSLA), 4) (Beginning Teacher Support) BTSA/New Teacher Project, 5) California Technology Assistance Project (C-TAP), 6) S-4, 7) Bilingual Teacher Training Program (BTTP), 8) Monterey Bay Regional Partnership (MBRP) and 9) subject matter projects including: Central California Writing Project, California Reading and Literature Project (CRLP), Monterey Bay Consortium Math Project (MBCMP), LASER Science, History Social Science Project. We either house coordinators from these projects at our COE or include their representatives on program planning teams. We also maintain long-standing working relationships with local businesses, Cabrillo College and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

### **Barriers To Student Achievement and Success**

**Barrier #1 Ineffective or inefficient organizational systems in schools and classrooms.** Organizational structures and processes in underperforming schools often lack clarity and consistency. Enormous amounts of time are spent on activities that may be minimally effective in getting the desired results. New principals rarely have knowledge of how to examine these processes and develop clear goals for improvement. They engage in random acts of improvement based on funding and resource availability. To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their systems and align resources with goals, they need an integrated management approach. The Baldrige approach teaches the use of quality tools and how to develop effective and efficient systems while providing a framework for future continuous improvement efforts.

**Barrier #2 High poverty and limited English proficiency.** There is a huge achievement gap in our county (and within the state of California) between schools that have high numbers of low socio-economic and English Language Learners and schools that are affluent and lack ethnic and language diversity. High poverty students are often characterized as having limited experiences that prepare them for academic success and having little intrinsic motivation. We have found that the majority of these students may have general, long-term goals but have little experience and success setting on-going, sequential and realistic goals focused on both short and long term results. In the Baldrige approach they are key leaders in their learning processes and become proficient at setting and achieving goals.

Students with limited English proficiency, regardless of socio-economic status, need assistance with developing specific language skills. In the past, English language instruction for English Learners has focused on conversational, survival and social language. Academic language has not been explicitly taught and as a result, English Learners have an extremely low rate of success in mainstreamed classes. English learners need to be *taught English* (grammar, syntax, layers of language, morphology, etc.), *not just taught in English*. Assessments of language proficiency are often not administered or interpreted accurately. In addition, many teachers do not use the ELD standards to guide their instruction simply because they have not been trained to use these standards. Aligning staff development needs with student learning needs is one of the Baldrige criteria requirements.

**Barrier #3 Limited use of standards-based classroom practices.** In low performing schools, classroom instruction is not aligned to standards – too often, teachers are targeting standards one or more years behind current grade level. In addition, there is little alignment of curriculum, instruction, instructional materials and assessment to grade level standards. This is partially due to the limited knowledge and experience of new teachers. Professional

development training, intensive coaching, systems alignment, and frequent monitoring of results are essential to success in a standards based approach and in a Baldrige based system.

**Barrier #4 Data to drive decision-making is not readily available at the school and classroom level.**

Key decisions need to be based on the immediate and on-going collection and analysis of relevant data. Low performing schools in our area have limited access to and understanding of the data that is needed to drive their decision-making processes. Data is rarely presented in user-friendly formats and is frequently misunderstood by teachers, parents, and site administrators. Data is not disaggregated in meaningful ways to help target immediate interventions for students and training for teachers, such as assessing standards mastery by individual students on a weekly basis. Low performing schools need assistance in collecting, analyzing and interpreting relevant data. This is a core value and fundamental criteria in a Baldrige system.

**Barrier #5 Lack of collaboration among service providers resulting in scattered approaches to professional development.**

Many district, county and regional programs provide exceptional staff development. For example, beginning teachers receive excellent support from the New Teacher Project to help them improve instructional skills, and tenured teachers may receive content training from the subject matter projects. However, the goals of the school, data from student achievement, and the training needs of individual teachers are rarely taken into consideration. Compounding the problem, regional providers do not coordinate their services at a particular school site. They operate in isolation based on their project requirements. Low performing schools would benefit from a collaborative and integrated approach to professional development by all providers that uses data and information to drive their services.

## **2) GOALS**

**Goal #1) The Santa Cruz County Office of Education Baldrige in Education approach works with low performing schools to create high performing systems. The SCCOE will expand its successful Baldrige School Leadership Team approach to include and integrate services between the SCCOE, regional partners, districts and six low performing schools.**

Baldrige in Education is an integrated and systemic approach to school improvement. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education has applied this approach in its work with local schools and is realizing success at both school and classroom level. Implementing this model requires alignment of all goals, resources and systems, on-going relevant assessment, sharing of best practices, and a continual focus on results. The Baldrige in Education approach ensures that all students (low SES, English Language Learners, Title 1, etc.) make continuous progress on their targeted academic goals.

The model is truly systemic and can be implemented in all organizations, including districts and regional providers. Together, all stakeholders, will form a powerful intervention team (Baldrige Achievement Plus) using the Baldrige Educational Criteria and core values as a framework for high student achievement and continuous improvement.

**Goal #2) To develop and implement a model, high quality professional development system that focuses on the research based strategies for effective instruction.**

Professional development must be targeted, flexible, and involve fast response. Professional development from the SCCOE and regional providers will be part of a comprehensive Baldrige Achievement Plus Plan that addresses the needs of teachers and administrators. The Baldrige Achievement Plus Team will abandon the old model of offering isolated trainings by separate providers and move towards an integrated and aligned system of professional development. Training in content, best practices in reading and mathematics instruction, integrated management systems in the classroom and at the school level, and shared leadership will be offered. Coaching is essential and the Baldrige Achievement Plus Team will coordinate the training and services of coaches to ensure the success of classroom teachers and site administrators.

**Goal #3) To build the capacity of SCCOE and regional service providers in collaboration with schools and districts, to model and implement common systemic information systems and data driven decision making processes.**

Information and Analysis is the foundation of the Baldrige approach. School processes are evaluated and improvement cycles are established for key demographic, process, outcome, and perception data. Data is disaggregated in numerous ways to identify need areas so interventions are appropriate and timely. Key comparison data is used to benchmark other schools and, when appropriate, other organizations. Organizational performance indicators are compared to student achievement data. All decisions require baseline data and information prior to enacting a change. An on-line, realtime data management system to track student mastery of content standards in reading and mathematics will be implemented to assist with instructional decision-making by classroom teachers and to target intervention efforts by the Baldrige Achievement Plus Team. On-line databases will be utilized to share information among providers.

**Goal #4) To develop a clear plan for replication and dissemination of the Santa Cruz County Baldrige Achievement Plus Model of systemic improvement for student achievement.**

The Baldrige criteria for high performance have been applied to hundreds of businesses and educational organizations. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education's Baldrige in Education Quality Center has developed training programs that have resulted in increased student achievement in classrooms in twenty-one of our schools. At the district level, we have trained district office and school teams from Santa Cruz City Schools, Soquel Union School District, Dos Palos School District and Eastside School District. Clovis Unified attended the SCCOE trainings and has successfully replicated the model in six schools and four district departments. Long Beach Unified has successfully applied the model in its district office. Several county offices (Madera, Monterey, Santa Clara and San Benito) are participating in the training and site visits. Regionally, Superintendents Walt Buster, Clovis Unified School District, Carl Cohn, Long Beach Unified School District and John Casey, Pajaro Valley Unified School District presented their district successes at the ACSA, Superintendent's Symposium. Presentations have also well received at CTA/CSBA and CDE, JCCASAC as well as at business organizations such as the IECC. Sharing of the successful skills, practices and processes that get results are integral parts of a high performance system. Using both traditional (professional journals, presentations at local, regional, state and national conferences, district newsletters, newspapers, etc) and unique (business publications, electronic videostreamed professional development, student voices) pathways of disseminating the project findings is part of this plan.

## **Sustainability**

The SCCOE implemented the Baldrige in Education approach in 1995 and has continued to support it to the present. The Superintendent, Board and Cabinet will continue their commitment to work with local schools and regional partners. All project participants will be required to commit to continue coordination of services and sharing of best practices and results for a 3-year period.

## **3) SOLUTIONS**

### **Solution to Barrier #1 Use the Baldrige in Education Criteria to create an effective and efficient organizational system for low performing schools.**

Since 1995, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education has embraced the Baldrige in Education (BiE) model that combines the best practices in instruction, management and leadership systems to create data-driven, school-wide continuous improvement. Districts in Texas, Florida, Minnesota, and North Carolina that have used this model are achieving the nation's highest scores on norm and criteria referenced tests directly related to their state standards. Beyond state testing, districts using this approach attain the highest SAT scores when compared to similar districts. Locally, 74-77% of students in classes employing the Baldrige approach scored at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> NPR on the SAT-9 tests in reading, well above the county and the state averages. In a direct comparison of classrooms using the Baldrige Integrated Management System approach to classrooms using traditional approaches, the students scored 10-14 points higher in SAT-9 NPR scores in reading and mathematics.

The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, approved by Congress in 1998, are the basis for this quality improvement and mandate that significant improvement results be obtained for all students regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, or language development. The seven Baldrige criteria are: Leadership, Strategic Planning, Student and Stakeholder (Customer) Focus, Information and Analysis, Staff Focus (Human Resources), Process Management, and Performance Results. Together with the Baldrige core values, these criteria provide the framework to help districts, schools, and teachers to assess their organizational effectiveness.

The Baldrige model uses a unique approach in applying seven quality criteria and fourteen core values to schoolwide systems. Within the Baldrige framework, leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Using data and information, school leadership teams composed of board members, administrators, parents and teachers determine the mission and aims for the organization, the goals, and the expected results. They focus on results by analyzing data and information, regularly monitoring progress and adjusting processes and goals.

All individuals in the organization apply the Baldrige criteria and quality tools to study and improve their organizational and instructional processes. The approach used with school leaders is applied as well to all other school groups such as maintenance, cafeteria, classroom aides, school site councils, student governance groups, etc. The Baldrige approach involves everyone in understanding their role in student achievement and constantly monitoring their individual progress.

Teachers use the Baldrige criteria and core values to establish a productive climate and evaluate learning and organization systems. Starting with clearly understood and displayed state standards, each teacher reviews their grade level expectations and then each class and student set goals. These goals are continually revised and tracked in data portfolios. Teachers and students analyze student work and achievement data to determine which "best practices" match

diverse student needs and are effective in helping students meet or exceed standards. Teachers regularly identify and share these best practices and the results they are achieving at staff meetings. Teachers have input on the training and support they need to meet district and state standards and goals. Often they write individual goals aligned with school, district and state standard goals. Staff and students constantly review learning processes (i.e. study skills, reading strategies, math problem-solving processes, etc.) and set continuous cycles to study and make improvements that get results. (Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles).

The district office, including the Superintendent and Board, plays a significant role in a Baldrige system. They lead schools in all improvement efforts. They model quality tools, survey their schools for needs and expectations and engage in continuous improvement cycles for processes that directly affect schools such as transportation, recruitment, assessment, materials purchasing, etc.

In an aligned system such as the one described above, not only is there greater clarity and unity with staff, parents and students, but instruction and allocation of resources become more efficient and effective as "random arrows" are realigned to accomplish common goals. This system becomes a way of doing business and can be utilized to turn any educational system into a high performing organization.

**Solution to Barrier #2a: Provide the means to empower students to be an integral part of school change through shared leadership, data management and goal setting.**

In a truly systemic approach, students are included in the improvement process. They align their own mission, goals and data collection to classroom, school and district goals. Students track their progress, evaluate "what's working" in their learning processes, and give input on the systems and educational training they need to get results. Students at all levels take on new leadership roles by interviewing next year's teachers for their grade-level expectations, and using data to drive decisions (i.e. giving input on adjusting the daily schedule to allow more time for targeted instruction and sharing the "what's working" in areas such as study skills and reading strategies). Empowering students to take charge of their learning has been one of the great successes of the SCCOE Baldrige Leadership Schools and the success has been achieved by representatives from every school and district who attended our trainings and implemented integrated management systems in the classroom.

**Solution to Barrier #2b: Provide accurate assessment and instruction in reading and mathematics using the ELD standards for English language learners.**

The Baldrige Achievement Plus Team will provide needed training in assessing and placing ELL's using the new CA ELD test. They will coordinate services to provide training and coaching in areas such as educational linguistics in order for teachers to teach literacy skills to English learners using the ELD standards. Teachers will receive training in: instructing English learners to master academic English, using ELD standards, providing access to language and the core curriculum and evaluating the appropriateness of various methods, materials and approaches for helping English learners succeed in reading, math and all content areas.

**Solutions to Barrier #3 Provide coordinated and targeted staff development training in standards based instruction and assessment.**

The Baldrige Achievement Plus Team with district, SCCOE and regional providers will target staff development needs in reading and mathematics. After an analysis of student achievement data and staff surveys, the Baldrige Achievement Team Plus will assist district and schools in selecting strategies and interventions grounded in

research to best assess and teach students at their level of need. Coaches and support staff will help schools maximize resources to monitor and evaluate intervention efforts; using the database and scheduling small groups of students for sufficient time for instruction and to monitor and adjust instruction and schedules as needed. School instructional systems must be developed that provide for systemic diagnosis and strategic reteaching based on individual student needs. Schools will develop a continuum of service including providing core curriculum for all students, intervention for strategic students as well as expanded instruction for advanced students. Effective instruction must be intensive enough to close the gap and must match the students' level of reading development. A system to monitor student performance both formatively and summatively will be put in place.

Teachers will have access to on-line training opportunities, such as TREC and RISE in reading along with intensive school team trainings and follow-up coaching in priority instructional components of effective reading and mathematics programs. The Baldrige Achievement Plus Team will assist schools in developing both the culture and protocols for teacher teams to collaboratively analyze and diagnose student work on a regular basis and to identify and become proficient in using instructional strategies identified through research as most effective in building student achievement. In addition, administrators will develop instructional leadership in research-based classroom practice and standards-based instruction through training, including the ACSA Principal Walk Through program, practicums, coaching and principal leadership networks.

#### **Solutions to Barrier #4 Provide relevant data that is readily accessible to drive decision-making .**

The aim of all data collection and analysis is to provide interventions, targeted, timely and flexible, for both school administrators, teachers and students. The Baldrige Achievement Plus Team will include technology and assessment representatives from the SCCOE and regional partners who will coordinate with district technology leads to implement a real time, on-line database that tracks standards. The goal is for teachers to be able to track standards mastery and for teachers and school administrators to target individual students for specific interventions. School and district administrators, and the Baldrige Achievement Plus team will then target the services, training and coaching that address specific learning needs of students and professional development needs of staff. This also allows the team to share knowledge and model the use of data to drive decisions towards coordinated and targeting services for our low performing schools. In addition, school site assistance will be provided to assess the effectiveness of their processes in data collection, analysis and communication of results. This assistance will include evaluating the frequency of data collection, developing more user-friendly displays of data, and accurately interpreting data for decision-making purposes.

#### **Solutions to Barrier # 5 Use the Baldrige criteria as a framework for collaboration among district, SCCOE and regional service providers resulting in aligned approaches to professional development.**

For this proposal, the Baldrige model is extended, becoming truly systemic, by including the expertise of our regional partners. COE and regional partners will also engage in the same model used by the low performing schools. Extending this model from a county office of education to regional partners involves: identifying the leadership role each provider takes in serving districts and schools, developing a common mission and goals for the Baldrige Achievement Plus Team that is aligned with goals of the district and school, understanding the customer's (the low performing school's) needs and expectations, disaggregating data to identify individuals and areas in which

standards and goals are not being met, and identifying and studying the processes of both the school and the team that get results and finally, setting up continuous improvement cycles for those processes. The district is involved as a partner and provides the Baldrige Achievement Plus Team with their aim, goals, standards, and desired results. They agree to assist the school with improvement efforts by surveying for their needs, and prioritizing any efforts towards providing time for school site collaborative work. They attend all Baldrige Achievement Plus Team meetings and participate in all team activities.

#### **4) ACTIVITIES**

**Goal #1) The Santa Cruz County Office of Education Baldrige in Education approach works with low performing schools to create high performing systems. The SCCOE will expand its successful Baldrige School Leadership Team approach to include and integrate services between the SCCOE, regional partners, districts and six low performing schools.**

##### **Activities:**

- 1) Select six low performing schools from district office recommendations, the Baldrige in Education Leadership Academy, and school applications to Baldrige Achievement Team Plus.
- 2) Meet with regional providers, SCCOE department leads, district and school partners to identify a common mission, aligned goals and expected results.
- 3) Training in Baldrige systems approach for all program participants.
- 4) Provide a matrix of services between regional and COE providers to meet the needs of district and schools.
- 5) Jointly identify roles and responsibilities and identify processes used by the Baldrige Achievement Plus Team that will be used to get the desired results.
- 6) School leadership and classroom teachers complete a self-assessment in organizational and instructional effectiveness using the seven Baldrige criteria for performance excellence.
- 7) School leaders attend 30 hours of training and classroom teachers attend 24 hours of training on integrated management systems.
- 8) Provide individual on-site coaching for school leaders and classroom teachers – minimum of 3 hours each directed at daily practices, and the achievement of student, classroom and individual professional goals.
- 9) Assist district and school in reorganizing schedules and programming to obtain needed time for collaboration and monitoring of results.
- 10) Monthly meetings with Achievement Team Plus all participants to share work in progress, review services and interventions, and continuously evaluate progress on project goals.
- 11) Use PDC regional provider school informational service web database to provide continuous access to programs within schools and commitments of providers to collaborate to coordinate services around identified target schools and district goals.

**Goal #2) To develop and implement a model, high quality professional development system based that focuses on the research strategies for effective instruction.**



**Activities:**

- 1) SCCOE Baldrige Achievement Plus Team leads will meet monthly with C&I administrators to identify a countywide focus for professional development, share issues, needs and plan collaboratively as a county to meet district issues and needs.
- 2) Train super substitutes for teachers for 3 – 10 days of staff development.
- 3) Baldrige Achievement Plus Team works with all teachers in development of backwards mapping from standard to instructional implementation, use development of targeted classroom assessments, and strategic teaching, analysis of assessments and student work to drive instruction and reteaching.
- 4) Baldrige Achievement Plus Team provides professional development in differentiating instruction and student directed learning to assist all students.
- 5) Each provider will provide specific coaching in identified areas of need:
  - PDC works with staff development director on weekly basis, using coaching model adapted from Bruce Joyce and Bev Showers along with Bob Garmston's work.
  - Baldrige coaches from business and the SCCOE BiE Quality Center will work with principals and Baldrige Achievement Team Plus on system wide organizational effectiveness, and with teachers on classroom integrated management systems.
  - Coaching for teachers will be provided by the SCCOE 7-12 Reading Grant literacy coaches, 4-12 Math Grant teacher trainers, and National Board Certified teachers through the Region 5 PDC Support Collaborative and the New Teacher Project depending on their staff development needs.

Coaches serving all of the schools will meet quarterly to identify successful strategies and essential learnings.

Individual coaches will meet twice a month to coordinate services and efforts.

- 6) Identify, train and coach principal and teacher leaders to: continue training and coaching in subsequent years, serve on County-wide CCC action team to plan and provide county wide professional development.
- 7) District and school subject area teacher leaders meet monthly with regional providers and COE staff to backwards map standards grade K-12 in each of the core subject areas to meet requirements of the CAHSEE.
- 8) Provide support for principals and teachers to participate in on-site "best practice" exchange groups and cross-county networking on integrated management implementation.

**Goal #3) To build the capacity of COE and regional service providers, in collaboration with schools and districts, to model and implement common systemic information systems and data driven decision making processes.**

**Activities:**

- 1) Input data and information on each school into the regional providers informational service web data-base developed by our regional PDC. This database can be used to share information to coordinate services.
- 2) Deploy an internet information tracking system for the Baldrige Achievement Team Plus so that each provider can input activities, observations and recommendations upon providing a service to the schools. All providers will be issued passwords and access codes to the secure system.
- 3) Conduct the following site based assessments for pre and post project study:
  - a) Study of the data collection, analysis and communication processes used by the school.

- b) School self-assessment on standards based instruction/curriculum/materials.
  - c) Staff self-assessment on school and classroom level integrated management systems.
  - d) Assess teaching staff's skills in analyzing student work, and other data related competencies.
  - e) A four-year trend analysis of SAT-9 student achievement data for each school to assist them with goal setting.
  - f) Baldrige Achievement Plus Team with district and school representatives will analyze the data and information collected above and develop goals that align services to meet the school's needs.
- 4) Develop an on-line, real time database aligned to district standards tests to track standards mastered by each student. Use the information to target interventions for student learning and professional development for teachers.
  - 5) Develop and administer a self-assessment for Baldrige Achievement Plus Team and all project partners to evaluate their effectiveness on project goals and activities on an on-going basis.

**Goal #4) To develop a clear plan for replication and dissemination of the Santa Cruz County Baldrige Achievement Plus Model of systemic improvement for student achievement.**

**Activities:**

- 1) Develop materials that describe the project's training, coaching and leadership development models and successes in electronic and print media. Distribute at conferences, meetings, newsletters, etc.
- 2) Regional and county office providers meet twice a year through the PDC5 Regional Retreat to share work, progress, and form new collaborative partnerships to better serve low achieving students in Region 5.
- 3) Publish three articles written jointly by project participants in professional journals and newsletters.
- 4) Hold a regional conference for Quality Practices in Education in Spring of 2001 jointly hosted by the SCCOE, Clovis Unified District, and Long Beach Unified. This project will be highlighted in presentations at that conference.
- 5) Present project findings at four other professional organization conferences such as: Asilomar, ACSA conferences, PTA/CCBE/SCESSA, HP2, and at Santa Cruz Business Council and IECC meetings.
- 6) On-line information regarding this project will be available on the T-Cal website, the PDC website, and the Baldrige in Education website. Videostreaming success stories and best practices will be part of the information available.
- 7) The model and project outcomes will be shared at the PDC regional retreat. On-line staff development training is another way to disseminate project results and the proposed model.
- 8) Students will participate in a cross-county exchange of success stories and presentations of mission, goal-setting, data tracking, and achievement results to local schools, districts and regional partners.